

City of Palm Coast, Florida Agenda Item

Agenda Date: November 14, 2023

Department	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Amount
Division	CODE ENFORCEMENT	Account #
Subject: PRESENTATION - COMMUNITY CATS		
Presenter: Eva Rodriguez, Code Enforcement Technician III, Heather Priestap, Animal Control Officer, and Barbara Grossman, Code Enforcement Manager		
Attachments: 1. Presentation		
Background: City Council requested a presentation at their July 11, 2023, workshop on the topic of Community Cats. Staff will provide a presentation on the topic.		
Recommended Action: FOR PRESENTATION ONLY		



City of Palm Coast Community Cats

Presented By: Eva Rodriguez, Code Enforcement Technician III and
Heather Priestap, Animal Control Officer

Topics to Discuss

- Challenges with Free Roaming Cats
- Challenges with Trap & Remove
- Community Cat Programs
- Myths versus Facts
- Benefits to a Community Cat Program
- Community Caretaker Guidelines



What is a Community Cat Program?



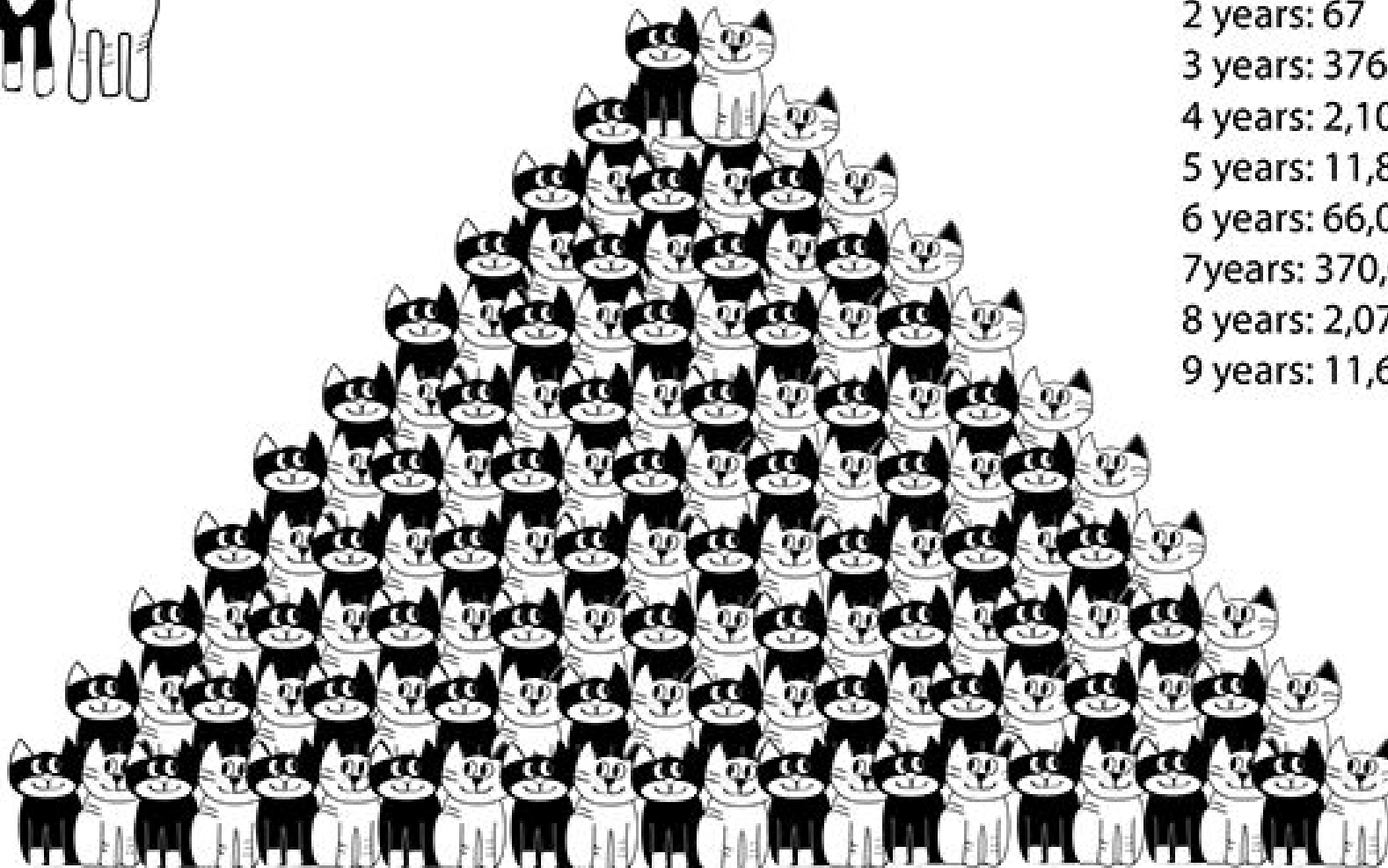
- Feral, stray, discarded, abandoned cats
- Volunteers/Caretakers
- Spay and neuter (reduces population)
- Rabies vaccination
- Ear notch/tipping (for identification)
- Return home to caretaker



Challenges with Free Roaming Cats

An unspayed female cat, her mate and all of their offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter can total:

1 year: 12
2 years: 67
3 years: 376
4 years: 2,107
5 years: 11,801
6 years: 66,088
7 years: 370,092
8 years: 2,072,514
9 years: 11,606,077



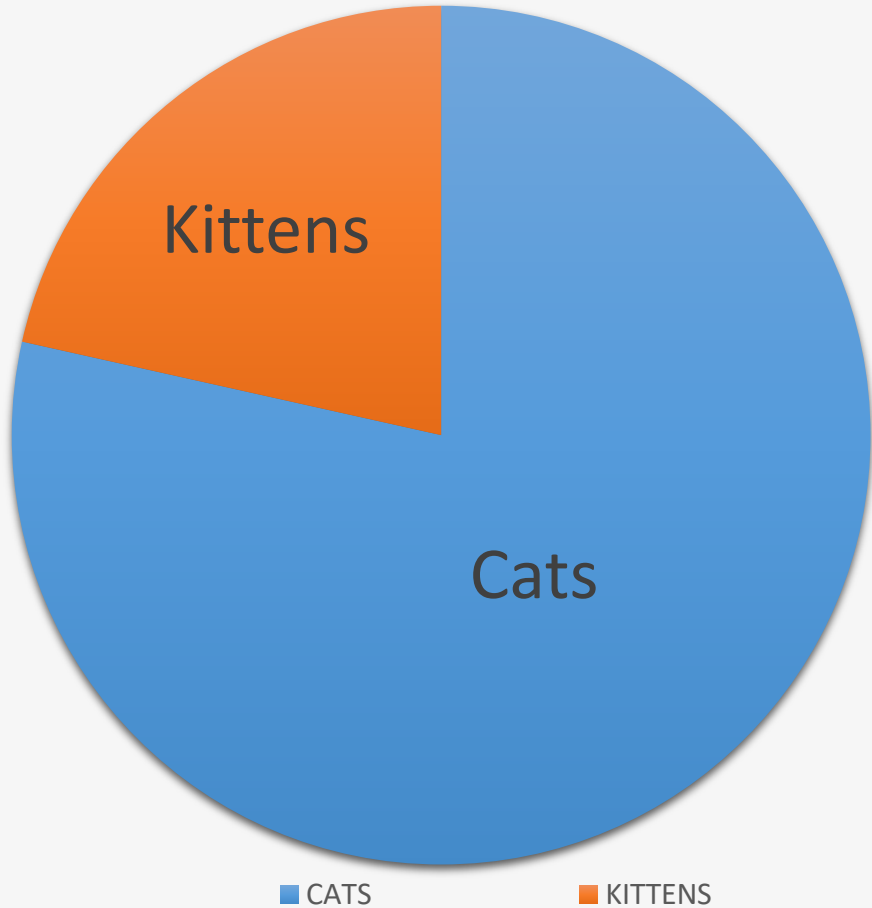
- Conjugate in groups called “Colonies”
- Produce offspring at astronomical rates
- Create nuisance conditions, such as fighting, mating, and spraying

Challenges with Trap & Remove

- Cats trapped, removed, shelter
- New unaltered cats enter area
- Cats reproduce; colony reestablishes
- Never ending Cycle “Vacuum effect” (new cats arrive take advantage of vacated food, shelter, and reproduce)
- Too many cats, too few animal control officers
- Trap and remove policies have failed for decades



Palm Coast Intake



Cats	511
Kittens	140
TNR	119
Adopted	458
Euthanized	35

18.28%
TNR



Why a Community Cats Program?

	Community Cat Program	Trap and Remove
Euthanasia	Lowers euthanasia	High euthanasia
Population	Lowers population	Population continues to grow & new cats fill vacancy
Vaccinations	Rabies vaccination, healthier cat population/community	None
Wildlife impact	Less impact on wildlife	High impact on wildlife
Cost/Intake volume to FHS	Lowers intakes and cost to the City	High intake/overcrowding at the Flagler Humane Society (FHS) and high cost

Benefits to a Community Cat Program

- Successful Program
- Cats-Trapped and sterilized
- Cats-Ear Tipped
- Adoptable Cats-Removed
- Unadoptable Cats-Returned
- Caretaker-Feeds and Monitors
- Reproduction colony-Reduced & eliminated in 4 to 7 years



Additional Benefits to a Community Cat Program continued



Reduces Nuisance Behavior:

- Noise from mating is eliminated
- Odor from unneutered male cats
- Sterilized cats roam less
- Property damage / unsanitary conditions

Saves Resources:

- TNR cost half that of trap and euthanize
- Volunteers provide labor (trapping, transport, etc.)
- Nonprofits and private donations to assist with cost

Community Cat Caretaker Guidelines

Caretaker will commit to:

- caring and maintaining
- registering
- feeding
- sterilizing and vaccinating



- removing sick
- providing proof of sterilization, vaccinations, medical

Animal Control will have the

Right to seize and remove colony for:

- public health and safety
- complaints

Caretakers Guidelines for feeding

TRAP/NEUTER/RETURN (TNR) COLONY MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

1. Trap the cat (**make sure that a spay/neuter clinic appointment has been made prior to trapping**)
 2. Take to assigned spay/neuter clinic as soon as possible after trapping.
Note: Follow TNR Instructions for after surgery care.
 3. Spay or Neuter and Vaccinate for Rabies and Distemper and Ear Tip
Note: The cat's ear will be tipped for identification (using Alley Cat Allies method) so if it is taken to a shelter the cat will be returned to the area where it was picked up.
All cats returned to the colony or are inside/outside cats must be ear tipped – no exceptions.
 4. Set-up feeding location and/or feeding station on your property or where permission has been obtained from property owner.
 5. **Notes for residential colonies:**
 - a) Cats should be fed in the morning if possible. If feeding in the evening make sure that it is before dark and all food and bowls remaining after feeding are removed.
Note: Feeding at night and not removing dishes and food after cats have eaten will draw raccoons and coyotes – both will kill the cats to get to the food and the coyotes will eat the cats.
 - b) No plates, dishes, or food containers of any kind should be left outdoors after cats have been fed.
 - c) Neighbors rights should be respected so feeding should be in a discreet area of the yard and not on property lines.
 6. **NO TRASH SHOULD OF ANY KIND SHOULD EVER BE LEFT AT THE FEEDING AREA – RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL!**
 - a) All trash or old food should be disposed in a proper container and not left at the feeding site.
 7. If using any type of pesticide or pest deterrent you need only apply during the months of May through October to prevent ants and fleas from infesting the area as long as you follow manufacturer directions and make sure it is **safe for cats** and other animals.
 8. **Cat colonies need to be monitored every day for new cats, kittens, sick or injured cats.**
Note: New cats that have been dropped at the colony should be trapped and fixed and returned to the colony.
Note: Kittens should be removed from mother as young as 5 weeks old if eating wet food and placed with foster or rescue for adoption. All kittens must be fixed thru TNR Program by age of 16 weeks. Kittens that are adopted to inside homes must be microchipped at no cost to City. Outside or inside/outside cats and kittens must be ear tipped.
Note: Female kittens can become pregnant at 4 months old and male kittens can mate at 4 months old.
Note: Sick and injured cats need to be trapped and provided with veterinary care as soon as possible as cats should never be allowed to suffer.
Note: Feeding and not fixing is not permitted.
 9. Communication between program administrators, animal control, coordinators, caretakers, trappers and veterinary clinics is the key to success for any TNR program.
- Note: **CLEANING THE TRAPS:**
Clean traps with a soap solution and disinfect them with a solution of 1 part bleach to 30 parts water. 92
Allow solution to dry, **then rinse it off thoroughly as bleach residue is harmful to cats.**



Myth versus Fact

Myth: Feral cats have a harsh life.

Fact:

- Fed by kind people
- Average life 10 yrs.
- Leukemia and FIV rate in feral cats vs. owned cats-no higher.

Myth: Feral Cats are the cause of wildlife decline.

Fact:

Humans are the number one threat to wildlife, not feral cats.

Myth: Feral cats carry diseases such as rabies.

Fact:

- Occasionally.
- Rabies treatment for rabies in humans nearly 100 percent effective.
- TNR programs vaccinate feral cats.



Myth versus Fact

Myth: TNR leads to nuisance complaints.

Fact:

- A well-run TNR program generally reduces nuisance complaints-majority of the time dramatically

Myth: TNR doesn't work.

Fact:

- Two ways to reduce and eliminate
 - Intensive TNR
 - Intensive eradication efforts

Myth: Residents are opposed to TNR.

Fact:

2014 national survey 68% preferred TNR over lethal injection. 2017 survey 72% supported TNR, compared to 18% favored lethal injection.



SOURCES

- Alley Cats
- Best Friends Animal Society
- City of Palm Coast Animal Control
- Community Cats of Palm Coast
- Concerned Citizens For Animal Welfare
- Flagler Humane Society
- Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Frontiers in Veterinary Science
- Operation Catnip
- University of Florida

